

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2003

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Council Passes Trenching Ordinance To Prevent Companies From Digging Up City Streets

Councilmember Atkins Had Pushed For New Policy Since Mid 2001

SAN DIEGO – In an effort to curb the wasteful practice of repeated trenching and unnecessary resurfacing of city streets by utility companies and contractors, the City Council passed a trenching moratorium Tuesday that will prohibit any company from trenching a street within three years of the street's last reconstruction or resurfacing.

Third District City Councilmember Toni Atkins, who chaired the city's Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee at the time the ordinance was originally introduced, was the driving force behind the new policy.

"In May of 2001, Channel 10 challenged me to take a leadership position on this issue and try to develop a way to coordinate infrastructure projects in the city, especially as they related to street repair. This ordinance addresses a major part of this coordination effort," Atkins said. "We have all seen the ill effects caused by utility trenches in our newly repaired streets. Not only is this a complete waste of money, but it has been proven that this greatly undermines the life of the street."

The ordinance had been pending since December 2001, but was put on hold while the city concluded its Franchise Agreement negotiations.

Under the ordinance, a company that trenches a city street that is not scheduled for or in need of resurfacing would have to do one of three things: pay an excavation fee, resurface the street or provide the city with a warranty for the work.

"By implementing this ordinance, we will now be able to ensure that the integrity and life of our city streets are maintained and that precious city resources are not wasted because of a lack of coordination," said Atkins. "The establishment of the proposed moratorium allows us to better coordinate all of our capital improvement projects and work in the city right of way. By implementing these actions, we are ensuring that the quality of our streets is not compromised."

Specifically, the ordinance establishes a moratorium on trenching city streets within three years of a

resurface job and one year of a slurry seal project. After the one-year moratorium for slurry sealed streets, utilities will be required to re-slurry streets from curb to curb in years two and three, instead of just patching the areas that have been trenched.

“The proposed ordinance provides flexibility to allow the necessary work to occur and will also hold those who do the work to an appropriate standard that protects the quality of our streets,” said Atkins.

Additionally, under the ordinance all utilities and city departments will be required to correct or repair their work within 30 days. And in October of this year, all utilities doing work on city streets will be required to attend a full day workshop on best methods for restoring the street.

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